

Notes On Conservation

(The following article was written by Dr. Lansing Bennett, a member of the Duxbury Conservation Commission, -- Ed.)

The January meeting of the Conservation Commission was held in conjunction with the Finance Committee in order to discuss the 1968 budget and the funding of the purchase of Bay Farm.

On Dec. 28, the Commission had met with the owners of Bay Farm, who agreed to sell the Duxbury portion -- some 40 or more acres -- to the town for the purpose of conservation. The only stipulation was the retention of one acre on Loring Rd. that had been promised to another party for some years. The selling price is \$200,000. Since the Conservation Commission has no funds of the amount required to bind such an agreement, no purchase and sales contract could be drawn, the owners being satisfied that the decision of the Town Meeting in March would determine the outcome of the negotiation.

With this agreement, the Commission came before the Finance Committee. Discussion of the role of Federal and State refunding was opened by Chairman Francis Rogerson, Jr., who pointed out that the town stands to receive back from conservation funds 75% of the purchase price, provided the Department of Natural Resources approves the project, and the appraised values coincide with the purchase price. Pursuant to this, the Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing at which time Mr. Brownell, or a member of his office (Department of Natural Resources, Conservation Services) is expected to attend. This meeting will be announced as soon as Mr. Brownell advises us of his schedule.

The recommendation of the Finance Committee will be made at Town Meeting. Meanwhile, the Commission has begun to make preliminary application for Self-Help funds.

As a matter of record, the Commission wishes it well understood that we fully appreciate the hazards of requesting Federal and State assistance. There is no guarantee that at some future date these agencies will not request more public access to this land. On the other hand, there is also nothing to stop these agencies from taking these lands at some future time if they so desire. The majority of the members of the Commission feel that the strength of Conservation Commissions throughout the State lies in their active participation in these programs. If the Commissions in the Commonwealth become well versed in the application of self-help programs, their influence should make the State abide by certain sections of the self-help program that provide for the preservation in "their natural state" of such lands.

As fellow taxpayers, the members of the Commission are aware of the burden \$200,000 places upon us. It will be our burden for probably the better part of the year until we are reimbursed. The majority feel that this is a very fair price, for the last great tract of open waterfront property in Duxbury. With the increase in population and the pressure on us to open up more land for development, the price can only go up.

These are bound to be those who can see only the immediate present, and who will never be convinced of the value of keeping 40 acres of land open on the waterfront now, or 25 years from now. But for that majority of townspeople who are in agreement with us, who appreciate the intangible feeling of an open space, who have seen hardtop and concrete overtake a countryside, who want to preserve some of Duxbury as we know it for those who follow us, we recommend the purchase of Bay Farm.